

Appl. No. 09/928,172

B<sup>1</sup> compression, with an arrow 52 provided to indicate the step of compression. Target 50 comprises a first thickness "X" prior to the compression 52 and a second thickness "Y" after the compression. The compression can be accomplished by, for example, cold forging or cold rolling. The final thickness of target 50 ("Y") can be, for example, less than 2% of the initial thickness of target 50 (i.e., a 98% compression), and is typically less than or equal to about 40% of the initial thickness of target 50 (i.e., a 60% compression). In particular embodiments, target 50 can be subjected to a 95% compression (i.e., compressed so that final thickness "Y" is about 5% of initial thickness "X").--

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Replace the paragraph beginning on line 1 of page 9 with the following text,

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B<sup>2</sup> --Assembly 70 can be formed in, or placed in, an atmosphere which is inert relative to oxide formation from materials of plate 60 and target 50. In embodiments in which plate 60 and target 50 comprise high-purity aluminum, or aluminum alloys, the inert atmosphere can comprise a vacuum, or consist essentially of, for example, one or more of nitrogen gas and argon gas. The inert atmosphere preferably does not comprise oxidative components (like oxygen), as such could adversely cause oxidation of the materials of one or both of the blank 60 and target 50.--

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Replace the paragraph beginning on line 21 of page 9 with the following text,

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B<sup>3</sup> -- An exemplary thermal treatment procedure for treating a target and backing plate which comprise aluminum is as follows. Initially, an assembly comprising a target joined against a backing plate is heated to a temperature of from about 280°C to about 400°C (preferably from about 300°C to about 350°C, and more preferably from about 300°C to about 344°C) and maintained at such temperature for a time of from 15 to 30 minutes. The assembly is then transferred to a forge which is also maintained at a temperature of from about 280°C to about 400°C. The forge is utilized to compress target 50 and backing plate 60 together to a pressure of from about 10,000 psi to about 16,000 psi. After compressing the target and backing plate, the assembly is transferred back to the furnace having a temperature of from about 280°C to about 400°C, and maintained at such temperature for an additional time of from about 10 minutes to about 30 minutes. --

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**In the Claims**

No changes are made to the claims.